



**FIGHTING ANALYSIS**  
**GENERAL MANAGERS' MEETING**  
March 9, 2009

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GM'S MEETING  
(FIGHTING)  
MARCH/09

# Fighting

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- **Fighting Under the Microscope – Why?**
  - Don Sanderson's death – January '09
  - AHL's Garrett Klotz injury from fight – January '09
  - NHL Fighting up more than 15% over 2007-08
  - Developmental Leagues (OHL, QMJHL) New Rules
- **History of Fighting**
  - How fighting has evolved from era to era
  - Cause and effect of rule changes (instigator); other initiatives



# Fighting

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- **Fighting in today's game**
  - Type of fights – different categories
  - How they start
  - Who is fighting and how often
  - Injuries from fighting
  - Helmets and Visors
  - Role of the Officials
  - Fighting in Developmental leagues



# Regular Season Fighting Majors By GM

Paul Holmgren	82	Brian Lawton	5
Doug Risebrough	68	Darcy Regier	3
Don Maloney	34	Doug Wilson	2
Glen Sather	31	Brett Hull	1
George McPhee	22	Steve Tambellini	1
Bob Murray	14	Kris King	169
Dale Tallon	13	Colin Campbell	72
Bob Gainey	12	Mike Murphy	20
Mike Gillis	8	Kay Whitmore	1
Darryl Sutter	6		

2ND AFTER  
BRASHEAR



# The Early Years - 1917-1949

- Fighting in the game predates the NHL.

NHA - 1910

\*

WHY  
WHEN  
↑  
IT'S "PART" OF THE GAME  
"NO BIAS - NO BULL"  
NO SPIN/AGENDA

- It has always been a part of the game that has been penalized (two minutes originally, now five minutes+).

ONE MONTH INTO 1ST SEASON..

- Toronto Star headline, January 29, 1918: "Two NHL Players Under Arrest on a Charge of Fighting, Fighting Players Remanded for Sentencing". Story chronicled a fight between Canadiens' Joe Hall and Toronto's Alf Skinner.



# The Early Years - 1917-1949

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- Major penalty first assessed to a fighter (initiates) in 1937 (other player received a minor). In 1947, rule changed - both players received major penalties.
- Averaged a fight for every 10 games played.
- 1930's – emergence of the “policeman” who could fight – Red Horner (6', 190 lbs.): “Conn Smythe called me the ‘policeman’ because I was so much bigger than most players and I had to look out for smaller ones. I fought some but was more of a bodychecker.”

• MEDIA COVERAGE



# The Original Six Era – 1950 to 1967

## “Fought Your Own Battles”

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- From 1950 through 1967: one fight for every four games played. “Safety valve theory” starts to appear – better to settle the score by dropping the gloves than swinging sticks.

STICK SWINGINGS A PROBLEM

- Fight leaders combined a high level of skill and toughness.

### Fight Leaders

1953-54	George Armstrong	6 (70-game season)
1958-59	Ted Lindsay	4
1963-64	Terry Harper	8
1965-66	Vic Hadfield	4
1967-68	John Ferguson	8





# The Original Six Era – 1950 to 1967

## “Fought Your Own Battles”

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- **Referee Red Storey:** “Rocket Richard never started many fights but he finished just about all of them. In the 50’s, the stars did their own fighting - there were no policemen.”
- 1960’s: emergence of the “policeman” who would fight. RED HORNER - “COULD”
- **Scotty Bowman:** “Chicago was a pretty big, tough team in the early 60’s. Montreal felt it got pushed around so it went out and got John Ferguson, Ted Harris and Terry Harper. Ferguson was brought in to look after Beliveau.”



# The Expansion Era - 1967 to 1979

## "Fighting Popularized"

TELEVISION  
MEDIA COVERAGE  
GAME OF THE WEEK

- In the 12-year period between 1967 and 1979, NHL expanded from six teams to 21 teams – 500 new player jobs were created (95% filled by players from North America).
- Fighting increased by 500% during this era from year prior to '67 expansion.
- "Safety valve theory" of the Original Six era replaced with fighting as a form of intimidation. One-on-one fight replaced with two-on-ones and bench clearing brawls as stars were targeted.



# The Expansion Era - 1967 to 1979

## "Fighting Popularized"

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### Fight Leaders

1970-71	Dennis Hextall	21
1974-75	Dave Schultz	26
1978-79	Dave Williams	20

REMEMBER: 1950's  
LINDSAY } 6-8  
ARMSTRONG } FIGHTS

- Courts got involved – players charged with assault (Government-sponsored investigations into NHL violence – McMurtry & Neron Reports). A League under siege – numerous bench-clearing brawls. NHL made cover of Sports Illustrated several times.



# Sports Illustrated

NOVEMBER 17, 1975 75 CENTS

## A VIOLENT SPORT TURNS VICIOUS



RANGERS VS. ISLANDERS  
PETE STEMKOWSKI  
JUDE DROWIN

PHOTO - NOT A  
STICK SWINGING  
FIGHTING

# The Expansion Era - 1967 to 1979

## "Fighting Popularized"

How PLAYERS  
VIEWED THEIR ROLE

- **Dave "Tiger" Williams:** "Very seldom would a tough guy start out by fighting another tough guy. If I was playing the Kings, I'd be going after and abusing stars like Marcel Dionne and Dave Taylor and their tough guy would be going after Darryl Sittler and Lanny McDonald. The last guy I was interested in fighting was their tough guy because it didn't serve any purpose."
- **Dave Schultz:** "It makes sense to try and take out a guy who's more important to his team than I am to mine."



## **The Expansion Era - 1967 to 1979**

### **“Fighting Popularized”**

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- While fighting rose dramatically in 70's, it still was not nearly as prevalent as in today's game. “Big Bad” Bruins '71-'72 Stanley Cup team had a total of 24 fighting majors (Jared Boll has 20 thus far in 2008-09).
- “Broad Street Bullies” won the Cup in 1973-74 while leading the League with 58 fights. Top three players in 2008-09 will combine for more fights than entire Flyers team.



# The 1980's – “Golden Era of Fighting”

MY DESCRIPTION!

- The 1980's were the most fight-filled period in League history, averaging about one fight for every game played.
- 1980's also featured: 7.5 goals-per-game; most lopsided games in League history and an average attendance of 13,000 per-game. 80% of CAPACITY
- 40% more fighting in the 1980's than in the 2000's.



# The 1980's – “Golden Era of Fighting”

WHY??

## Contributing Factors: 6 MAJOR ONES IN MY VIEW

- 1982-83: rosters increased from 17 to 18 skaters.
- 1981-82: doubled games played in division (8 from 4).
- Another doubling: teams employed at least two fighters (Kocur/Probert vs. Secord/Dupont; McSorley/McClelland vs. Hunter/Sheehy, etc.)
- Four out of five teams in each division made the playoffs (less competitive regular season). Bottom team often out of race by December.

DET vs. CHI  
EDM vs. CGY

QUEBEC-MONTREAL, ETC





# The 1980's – “Golden Era of Fighting”

- Until 1987, bench-clearing brawls were permitted (averaged 10 per-season in 80's).
- Fighters of the 1980's were teenagers in the early to mid '70's, idolizing the Big Bad Bruins and Broad Street Bullies.

TV → MEDIA COVERAGE IN 70'S

MORE GAMES ON TV IN 80'S

## Fight Leaders

1983-84	Chris Nilan	30
1985-86	Joe Kocur	36
1987-88*	Jay Miller	34
1988-89	Basil McRae	28

REMEMBER: 70'S  
SCHULTZ- } 20-25  
WILLIAMS } FIGHTS

\* 18 TEAMS THIS SEASON  
HAVE FEWER THAN MILLER



\*\* PAUSE → IDENTIFY 3  
FACTORS ON NEXT PAGE

# The 1990's – The “Instigator’s Role”

- **1992 BOG:** discussion of a game misconduct for a player who fights. 7 of 24 clubs were in favor – never came to a vote.

\*\*\* ① - EXPANSION ON THE HORIZON ② - NEW INTERIM PRESIDENT ③ VISION FOR THE 90'S

- **Compromise:** adopted a game misconduct to player that *instigates* a fight.

→ GROW THE GAME IN U.S.

- **Owner.** "This is great stuff because it goes right to the heart of the problem. We are going to deal directly with the guys who are the problem." NORM GREEN
- **Senior GM:** "Fighting should no longer be a tactic by a team to win a hockey game." HARRY SINDEN
- **Senior GM:** "We do not want the instigator. We do not want the premeditated fight." PAT QUINN



# The 1990's – “The Instigator’s Role”

- **Effect of the 1992-93 Instigator Penalty (Game Misconduct):** Fighting reduced by 33% and instigator penalties dropped by 40% from previous year.
- **Effect of the Instigator rule change in 1996-97: (10-minute misconduct):** Fighting majors increase by 13%; number of instigator penalties called increased by 15% from previous year.

## Fight Leaders

1991-92	Mike Peluso	34
1993-94	Marc Potvin	34
1996-97	Paul Laus	39
1997-98	Krzystof Oliwa	33

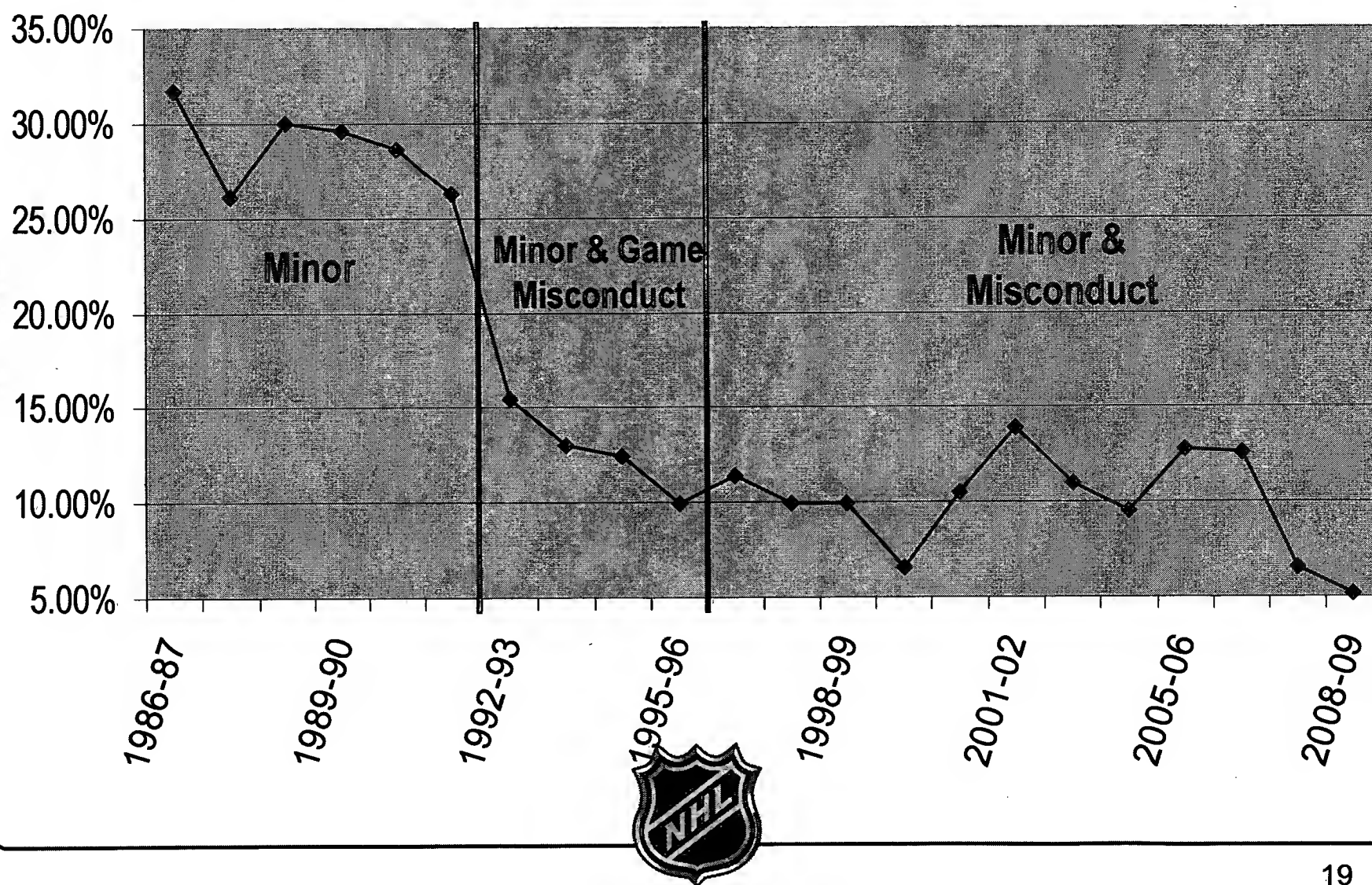
REMEMBER 80's  
MILLER-34  
NILAN-30

ALL-TIME RECORD

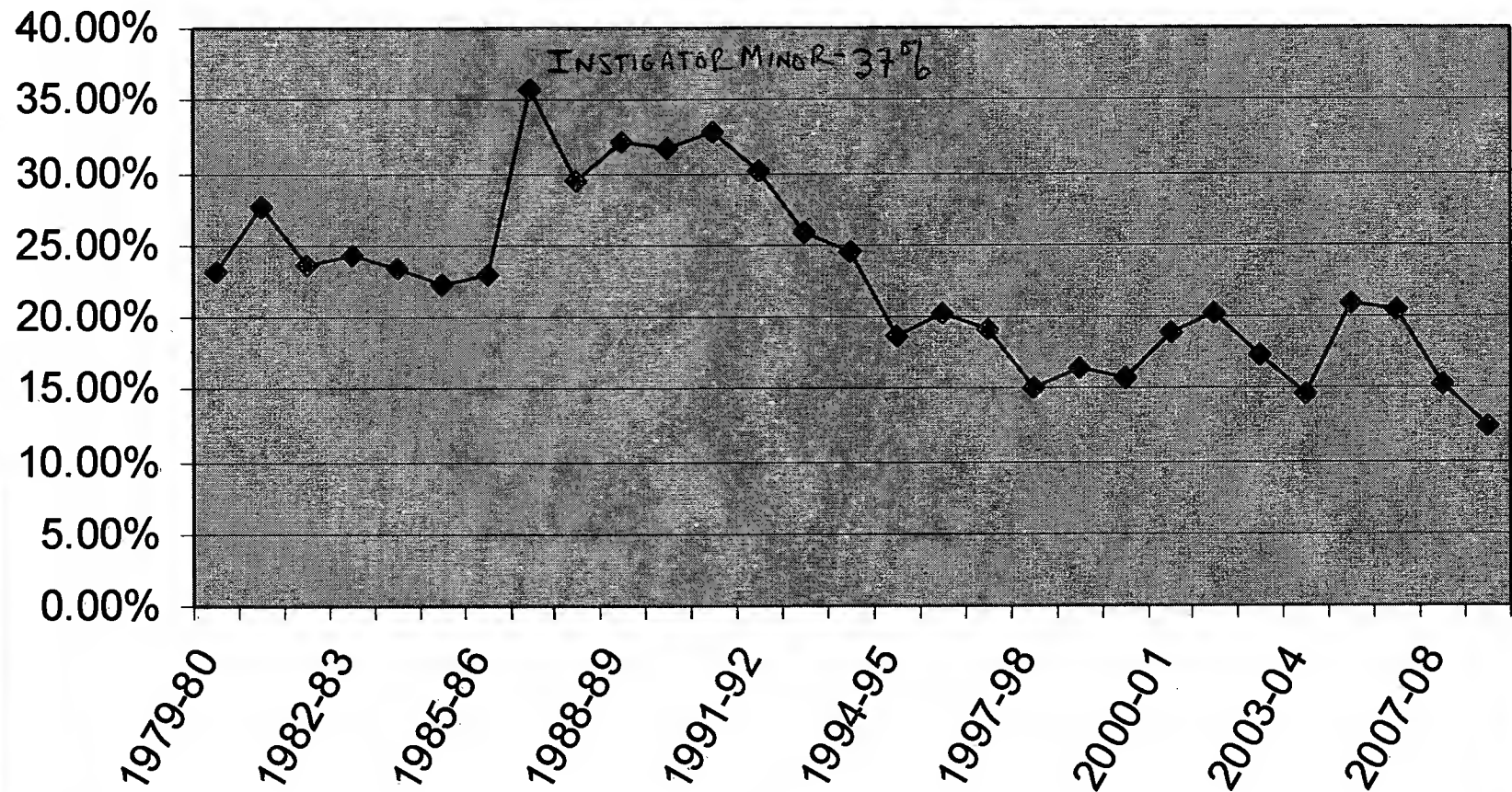
\* GET INTO GREATER DETAILS  
ON THE 2000'S SHORTLY



## Percentage of Fights with an Instigator Penalty



# Extra Penalty in a Fight



08-09  
12%



## Number of Suspensions Due to an Instigator

Year	Suspensions	Year	Suspensions
1992-93	5	2000-01	1
1993-94	6	2001-02	3
1994-95	0	2002-03	1
1995-96	2	2003-04	2
1996-97	0	2005-06	4
1997-98	1	2006-07	4*
1998-99	0	2007-08	3**
1999-00	0		



\* 3/4 due to instigator in last 5 mins

\*\* 3/3 due to instigator in last 5 mins

# Percentage of Players that Fight

	79-80 – 88-89	89-90 – 98-99	99-00 – 08-09*
<b>One or more fights (%)</b>	50%	39%	32%
<b>Five or more fights (%)</b>	16%	13%	9%
<b>10 or more fights (%)</b>	6%	6%	3.5%
<b>20 or more fights (#)</b>	58	94	36

- Almost 70% of players in today's game do not fight.
- There has been a 36% drop in the percentage of players that fight in the game in the 2000's as compared to the 1980's (40% more players and 46% more games in 2000's).
- There has been a 68% drop in the number of players that have 20+ fights per season between the 2000's and the 1990's (28% more games and 18% more players in 2000's).





# Number of Fights in a Game

**In last 30 years:**

highest: 2.1 majors-per-game (1987-88)

lowest: 0.75 majors-per-game (2005-06)

**2008-09: 1.2 majors-per-game**

% of fight-free games - low: 40% ('87-'88)

high: 71% ('05-'06).

**2008-09: 57% fight-free games**

Season	AVG	Ft Majors	GP	0 Fight	1 Fight	2 Fights	3+ Fights
1979-1980	1.4	1188	840	57%	27%	11%	4%
2008-2009	1.3	1118	891	57%	29%	11%	3%

30 YEARS LATER...  
ALMOST IDENTICAL

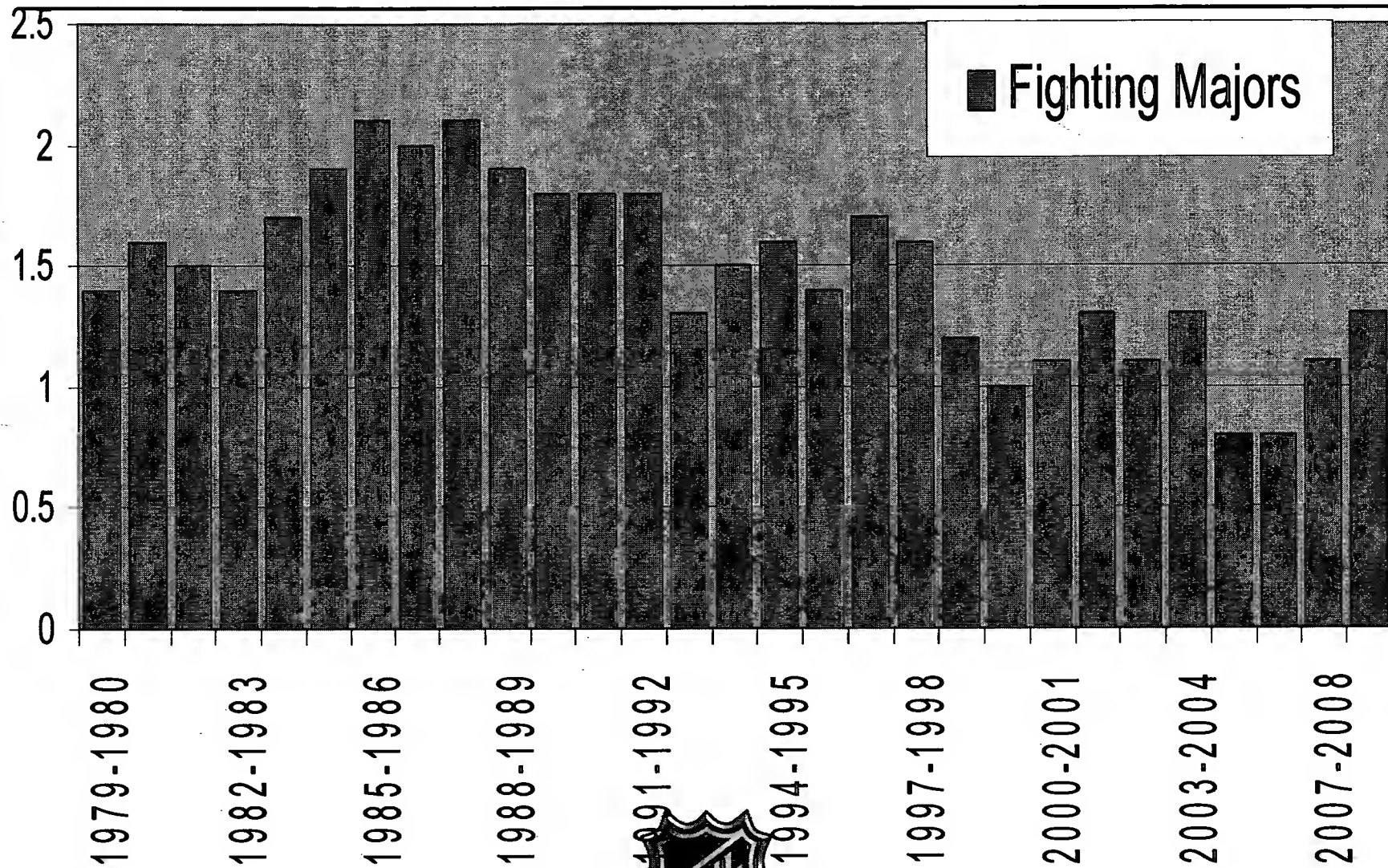




## # OF FIGHTS IN A GAME (BY PERCENTAGE)

Season	AVG	Ft Majors	GP	0 Fight	1 Fight	2 Fights	3+ Fights
1979-1980	1.4	1188	840	57%	28%	11%	4%
1980-1981	1.6	1322	840	51%	30%	13%	4%
1981-1982	1.5	1248	840	52%	31%	10%	5%
1982-1983	1.4	1174	840	54%	30%	12%	3%
1983-1984	1.7	1415	840	48%	32%	14%	4%
1984-1985	1.9	1569	840	50%	26%	14%	6%
1985-1986	2.1	1764	840	43%	30%	16%	7%
1986-1987	2.0	1671	840	43%	31%	16%	6%
1987-1988	2.1	1792	840	40%	33%	16%	7%
1988-1989	1.9	1577	840	46%	30%	15%	5%
1989-1990	1.8	1538	840	47%	30%	14%	6%
1990-1991	1.8	1521	840	46%	33%	13%	6%
1991-1992	1.8	1544	880	46%	33%	13%	5%
1992-1993	1.3	1257	1008	58%	29%	9%	3%
1993-1994	1.5	1643	1092	53%	29%	13%	4%
1994-1995	1.6	997	624	50%	30%	13%	5%
1995-1996	1.4	1538	1066	54%	28%	12%	4%
1996-1997	1.7	1793	1066	48%	31%	14%	6%
1997-1998	1.6	1652	1066	52%	30%	12%	4%
1998-1999	1.2	1308	1107	61%	26%	9%	3%
1999-2000	1.0	1132	1148	64%	27%	7%	2%
2000-2001	1.1	1353	1230	62%	26%	9%	2%
2001-2002	1.3	1584	1230	58%	29%	10%	2%
2002-2003	1.1	1321	1230	62%	27%	8%	2%
2003-2004	1.3	1561	1230	59%	28%	9%	2%
2005-2006	0.8	919	1230	71%	23%	5%	1%
2006-2007	0.8	987	1230	69%	24%	6%	1%
2007-2008	1.1	1316	1230	62%	27%	9%	2%
2008-2009	1.3	1118	891	57%	29%	11%	3%

## Average Fighting Majors Per Game



# Comparison of Fighters' Ice Time Per-Game

Year	Top 50	Top 30	Top 20	Top 10
ONLY CHARTED FOR 10 YRS. 1998-99	10:33	9:22	8:48	7:18
2003-04	8:05	7:41	7:10	6:16
2005-06	9:58	9:28	9:05	8:36
2006-07	8:44	8:50	7:18	7:35
2007-08	9:16	9:00	7:51	8:23
2008-09	8:41	8:12	8:14	7:54

- The top 10 fighters this season (16+ majors) are playing about 35 seconds more per-game than 10 years ago, remainder of regular fighters have all seen their ice time diminish from 10 years ago. STARS ARE PLAYING MORE
- As compared to the year prior to lockout, fighters' ice time this season (particularly Top 10), is up.



## Comparison of Fighters' Ice Time Per-Game

Year	Top 50	Top 30	Top 20	Top 10
1998-99	10:33	9:22	8:48	7:18
1999-00	10:17	9:53	9:48	9:51
2000-01	10:51	10:09	8:39	7:33
2001-02	8:37	8:39	7:50	6:28
2002-03	9:05	9:05	8:04	7:41
2003-04	8:05	7:41	7:10	6:16
2005-06	9:58	9:28	9:05	8:36
2006-07	8:44	8:50	7:18	7:35
2007-08	9:16	9:00	7:51	8:23
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- The top 10 fighters this season (16+ majors) are playing about 35 seconds more per-game than 10 years ago, remainder of regular fighters have all seen their ice time diminish from 10 years ago.
- As compared to the year prior to lockout, fighters' ice time this season (particularly Top 10), is up.



# Average Size of the Top Fighters

	Ht	Wt		Ht	Wt
<b>1979-80</b>	72.1	193.9	<b>2005-06</b>	74.2	217.1
<b>1990-91</b>	73.3	201.6	<b>2006-07</b>	74.2	222.0
<b>1998-99</b>	74.2	215.4	<b>2007-08</b>	74.1	213.3
<b>2002-03</b>	74.7	219.3	<b>2008-09</b>	73.9	212.4
<b>2003-04</b>	74.7	224.4			

SIZE OF FIGHTERS A CONCERN

- Size of top fighters:

1980's: Grew by more than an inch and almost 10 pounds

1990's: Grew by 1.5 inches and 20 pounds

2003-04: Peaked at almost 6'3" and 225 pounds

- Size of most frequent fighters has been on the decline since the lockout – returning to levels of the mid-90's.



# Average Size of the Top Fighters

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- The size of the League's fight leader:
  - 30 years ago - 5.9, 175 lbs. (Garry Howatt)
  - 20 years ago - 6.0, 200 lbs. (Chris Nilan)
  - 2003-04 - 6.5, 245 lbs. (Krzysztof Oliwa)
  - 2008-09 - 6.2, 210 lbs. (Jared Boll).



## Top 30 Fighters (Mar. 6)

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Jared Boll	20	Michael Rupp	13
Daniel Carcillo	18	Derek Dorsett	12
Riley Cote	18	Jody Shelley	12
Eric Godard	18	Darcy Hordichuk	11
Zack Stortini	18	Steve Montador	11
Cam Janssen	17	Andrew Peters	11
George Parros	17	Brandon Prust	11
Krys Barch	16	Donald Brashear	10
David Clarkson	16	Cody McLeod	10
B.J. Crombeen	16	Chris Thorburn	10
Shawn Thornton	16	Aaron Voros	10
Arron Asham	15	Derek Boogaard	9
Mike Brown	15	Andre Deveau	9
Tim Jackman	15	Ben Eager	9
Eric Boulton	14	Josh Gratton	9
Colton Orr	14	Matt Greene	9
Ian Laperriere	13	Raitis Ivanans	9
Chris Neil	13	Jamal Mayers	9



# Cause and Effect of Major Rule Changes in Fighting

GM'S  
10 MAJOR  
CHANGES IN  
40 YEARS →  
HAVE HAD AN  
EFFECT ON ASPECTS  
OF FIGHTING +-

## 1971-72 – Third Man In

**Rule Change:** A game misconduct imposed on a player who intervenes in a fight already in progress.

**Result:** Eliminated what had been a growing trend over the previous three years of two on one fights.

## 1982-83 – Roster Size Increase

**Rule change:** Number of skaters increased to 18 from 17 (had been 17 since 1971-72).

**Result:** number of fights increased by 43% over the next five years.





# Cause and Effect of Major Rule Changes in Fighting

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## **1986-87 – Instigator Minor Penalty**

**Change:** Instigator assessed an extra minor penalty.

**Result:** Instigator called in 30% of fights over ensuing six years. (Two most fight-filled years in League history were in first two years of instigator).

## **1987-88 – Leaving Bench to Fight**

**Change:** 10-game suspension to first player to leave the bench; five-game suspension to coach.

**Result:** While 20 players have been suspended since for coming off the bench, rule had desired effect with bench-clearing brawls being eliminated from the game.



# Cause and Effect of Major Rule Changes in Fighting

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## 1988-89 – Instigator with Visor

**Change:** Minor penalty to player who starts a fight with a visor on.

NOT SIGNIFICANT THEN  
MAYBE MORE SO IN FUTURE

## 1992-93 – Instigator

**Change:** automatic game misconduct, in addition to minor penalty, to player who instigates a fight.

**Result:** Fighting majors reduced by 33% from previous season; number of instigator penalties called dropped by 40% from previous year.



# Cause and Effect of Major Rule Changes in Fighting

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## 1996-97 – Instigator

**Change:** Misconduct, in addition to minor penalty, to player who instigates a fight (elimination of game misconduct).

**Result:** Fighting increases by 13%; number of instigator penalties called increased by 15% from previous year.

## 1998-99 – Two Referees

**Change:** Two-referee system used in 20 games per club.

**Result:** Fighting majors in two-referee games down 20% vs. one-ref games.



WE ARE AT SAME LEVEL  
AS 98-99

# Cause and Effect of Major Rule Changes in Fighting

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## 1998-99 – Taunting

**Directive:** Taunting identified as unacceptable part of game.

**Result:** Dramatic reduction in this aspect of fighting.

## 2005-06 – Instigator in Last Five Minutes

**Rule Change:** Instigator of a fight in final five minutes of game (or in OT), assessed a one-game suspension and coach fined \$10,000.

**Result:** 11 players have been suspended (and coaches fined) since rule adopted.

**Reason for rule change:** In the three years prior to the new rule (2001-04), 24% of all fights took place in final five minutes of game. In 2008-09, in 500 fights, 22 (4.4%) took place in last five minutes (3 instigators called).



# Cause and Effect of Major Rule Changes in Fighting

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## Other Initiatives on Fighting

*League has eliminated unseemly aspects of fighting*

WITH SUPPLEMENTAL DISCIPLINE

- Off-ice altercations with fans – 15 incidents (suspensions) in the 80's, seven in last 18 years
- Eye-gouging – 11 incidents between 1985-1995, two since (one this season)
- Head butting – 16 in the 90's, four in last eight years (one this season)
- Sucker punches – 15 in the 90's, six since



# Fighting in the Playoffs

## Fighting Majors/Game FIGHTS

1988	84	2.06 (87)
1992	86	0.38 (17)
1999	86	0.09 (4)
2008	85	0.16 (7)

- Since fighting in the playoffs (division-based format) peaked 20 years ago with one fight for every playoff game played, it has virtually disappeared from the playoffs.



# Fighting in the Playoffs

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## Since 1990-91 Season

- Team that led the League in regular season fighting majors:
  - Missed playoffs: 10 times
  - Lost in first round: 6 times
  - Won the Stanley Cup once.
- The team with the least regular season fighting majors:
  - Missed playoffs: 1 time
  - Lost in first round: 5 times
  - Lost in second round: 4 times
  - Lost in third round: 2 times
  - Lost in the Final: 1 time
  - Won the Stanley Cup: 4 times



PITTSBURGH-'91 & '92  
DETROIT-'02 & '08

# Fighting In Developmental Leagues

## Majors Per-game (through Feb. 22/09):

NHL	1.3	1118 fighting majors in 892 games	↓ **
AHL	2.2	1803 fighting majors in 832 games	+41%
WHL	1.9	1339 fighting majors in 693 games	+32%
OHL	1.7	1027 fighting majors in 593 games	+31%
QMJHL	0.9	508 fighting majors in 540 games	-30%
USHL	1.1	301 fighting majors in 271 games	-15%

- Since AHL adopted mandatory visors in 2006-07, fighting has risen each season (1.6 majors per-game in '06-'07 to 1.8 in '07-'08 to 2.2 in '08-'09).
- The top-ranked team in Canadian junior (Windsor, OHL) leads CHL in fights.





# Fighting In Developmental Leagues

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- The most frequent fighter in Canadian junior (Rigby Burgart, WHL) is 5'10, 215 – the new breed of fighter?
- Every major European league has had fights this season (40 in KHL, 12 in Swedish Elite League; Chris Simon leads the KHL with six fighting majors).
- Since OHL adopted helmet rule (one-game suspension if helmet is removed prior to fight) in January fighting has not been reduced.





## RESEARCH METHOD

2000-01 - MCSORLEY TRIAL  
THE "CODE"  
- ANALYZED EVERY FIGHT  
(NO HELMET/TAKEDOWN)

2008-09 - MUCH DEEPER LOOK

# FIGHTING IN TODAY'S GAME

# 500 Fights through Game #803 (Feb. 11, 2009)

Example of the information collected:

IN ADDITION TO WATCHING  
EACH FIGHT TWICE....  
LOOKING FOR THE  
FOLLOWING

Game Information:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
1	LGM	DATE	PER	PRTIME	VIS	HOME	F SCORE	SCORE	SITUATN	GOALTIME	SCORED
2	190	11/06/08	2	00:19:54	FLA	L.A	2-3	0-2	5 on 5	00:00:00	
3	361	12/03/08	1	00:08:31	ATL	OTT	1-5	1-2	5 on 5	00:00:00	
4	412	12/09/08	1	00:03:29	L.A	COL	1-6	0-1	5 on 5	00:03:28	COL
5	600	01/08/09	1	00:16:11	MIN	PHI	1-3	1-0	5 on 5	00:00:00	

Player and Penalty Information:

	V	W	X	Y	Z	AA	AB	AC
1	PLAYER B	TEAM	PENALTY	REFEREE	AMLG	CTRY	HT	WT
2	KEITH BALLARD	FLA	Fighting (maj) - Roughing	Bill McCreary	WCHA	USA	71	208
3	BORIS VALABIK	ATL	Fighting (maj)	Steve Kozari	OHL	EUR	79	235
4	JOHN ZEILER	L.A	Fighting (maj)	Dan Marouelli	USHL	USA	72	204
5	ERIK REITZ	MIN	Fighting (maj)	Kevin Pollock	OHL	USA	74	230



## 500 Fights through Game #803 (Feb. 11, 2009)

### Fight Information:

	AD	AE	AF	AG	AH	AI
1	<b>Category</b>	<b>Length</b>	<b>Take Down</b>	<b>Head Hits</b>	<b>Helmet</b>	<b>Visors</b>
2	<b>Aggressive - A</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>Yes</b>		<b>B off during</b>	<b>No</b>
3	<b>Defending - A</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>Yes</b>		<b>Both off before</b>	<b>No</b>
4	<b>Faceoff</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>No</b>		<b>B off during</b>	<b>No</b>
5	<b>Want To Go</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>Yes</b>		<b>Both Off Before</b>	<b>B - Yes</b>

	AJ
1	<b>Notes</b>
2	<b>Ballard takes exception to Calder's hit and initiates well behind the play</b>
3	<b>Start in the corner after Ryan Shannon gets hit, both drop gloves and skate to center</b>
4	<b>Zeiler hit Foote from behind the last time these two teams met, LA had just scored</b>
5	<b>Both 2min previous whistle, dropped gloves but were stopped by ref, fought right after penalty</b>



# 2008-09 Analysis Categories of Fights

WE CAN DEBATE...  
BUT THESE ARE MY  
5 CATEGORIES

## 1. "Want to Go"

- Start while play is going on
- No apparent reason for fight (i.e. no hit, cheap shot; goal, etc.)
- Happen for a myriad of reasons:
  - Give a "spark"
  - Set the "tone"
  - History between players
  - Incident in a previous game
  - Player was a healthy scratch in previous game
- Often one player is more willing, other player "happy" (or feels compelled) to oblige



# 2008-09 Analysis

## Categories of Fights

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### 2. “Face-off Fights”

- A specialized form of “want to go” fight.
- Player A and Player B line-up for face-off – fight immediately after puck dropped.
- In most cases, involves a verbal exchange before puck drop.
- To give a spark to a team that was just scored on or team that is “flat”.
- Coach puts out a fourth liner and other coach responds in kind.



## 2008-09 Analysis

### Categories of Fights

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#### 3. “Defending a Teammate”

Player A does something to Player B (ie. a hit, use of the stick, etc.) – teammate of Player B comes in (usually immediately) and fights Player A.

#### 4. “Aggressive Action”

Player A does something to Player B (ie. a hit, use of the stick, etc.) – Player B does not like it. Player A and Player B fight

#### 5. “Scrum”

Numerous players converge following a stoppage – two players emerge from the pack.



# 2008-09 Analysis Categories of Fights

CHANGE IN LAST 8 YEARS

Category	<u>2000-01</u> 669 Fights	<u>2008-09</u> 500 Fights
Want to Go	34.7% (232)	32.6% (163)
Defending Teammate	18.7% (125)	23.6% (118)
Off a Faceoff	16.6% (111)	21.6% (108)
Aggressive Action	22.4% (150)	14.0% (70)
From a Scrum	7.6% (51)	8.2% (41)





## “Want To Go” Fights

	<u>2000-01</u>	<u>2008-09</u>
<b>Want To Go</b>	34.6% (232)	32.6% (163)
<b>Off-setting</b>	83.6% (194)	95.7% (156)
<b>Extra Minor</b>	6.0% (14)	4.3% (7)
<b>Instigators</b>	9.5% (22)	0% (0)

- “Want to go” fights account for 32.6% of overall fights in 2008-09; Percentage was virtually identical in 2000-01.
- 95.7% of “want to go” fights have off-setting majors. Instigator has yet to be called this season in this category.
- Officials more likely to identify the “aggressor” in this category eight years ago (15.5% of these fights had extra minor in 2000-01 vs. 4.3% in 2008-09).
- Top 30 fighters in League fight each other in 40% of “Want to go” fights. Most of remaining 60% of these fights involve experienced fighters (i.e. players who average more than three fights per season).

75

STAGED  
FIGHTS



# “Face-Off Fights”

	<u>2000-01</u>	<u>2008-09</u>
Off a Faceoff	16.5% (111)	21.6% (108)
Off-setting	95.5% (106)	97.2%(105)
Extra Penalty	4.5% (5)	2.8%% (3)
Instigator	0.9% (1)	0.93% (1)

30% INCREASE  
IN 8 YEARS

- 21.6% of fights in 2008-09 have come directly after a face-off.
- 97.2% have off-setting majors.
- Of these 108 “Face-off” fights, 20% come right after a goal is scored (within five seconds). In 2000-01, 10% of fights came right after a goal is scored.

VIRTUALLY  
ALL “STAGED”

APPROXIMATELY  
200 of 500  
“STAGED”  
35-40%



# **“Face-Off Fights”**

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- The top 30 fighters in the League have accounted for 50% of the fighting majors in this category. In most cases when Top 30 are fighting off of a face-off, they are fighting each other (line matching).
- The top 50 fighters in the League (seven or more majors) have accounted for 80% of the fighting majors in this category.
- 95% of these fights have involved “fighters” (couple of exceptions – Crosby/McLean).



## “Defending A Teammate”

	<u>2000-01</u>	<u>2008-09</u>
<b>Defending a Teammate</b>	18.6% (125)	23.6% (118)
<b>Off-setting</b>	59.2% (74)	72% (85)
<b>Extra Penalty</b>	40.8% (51)	28% (33)
<b>Penalty to Aggressor</b>	21.6% (27)	15.3% (18)

- 23.6% of fights have come as a result of a player “standing up” for a teammate. 27% INCREASE IN 8 YEARS
- Of these 118 fights, on only 18 occasions (15.3%) was the player doing the hitting assessed a minor penalty for their actions (i.e. 84.7% of the time it was a clean hit).
- The player coming to the aid of a teammate was assessed an instigator in 22 of 118 fights (18.6%).



## “Defending A Teammate”

- 53.4% of the fights in this category in 2008-09 are the result of a teammate coming to the defense of a 2nd/3rd/4th line forward and/or #3-6 defenseman after they were hit.

2000-01 → 40%

'08-'09

26% - STAR  
22% - EUROPEAN  
7% - ROOKIE

- In 2008-09, 1.6% of fights started due to an action towards the goaltender, (Hit, late shot, slash) down from 2.3% in 2000-01.
- The top 30 fighters accounted for 24% of the fighting majors in this category.



# “Aggressive Action”

	<u>2000-01</u>	<u>2008-09</u>
<b>Aggressive Action</b>	22.7% (150)	14.0% (70)
<b>Off-setting</b>	72% (108)	80% (56)
<b>Extra Minor</b>	28% (42)	20% (14)
– to Aggressor	13.3% (20)	14.3% (10)
– for Retaliation	14.7% (22)	5.7% (4)

ALMOST 40% DROP  
BECAUSE TEAMMATE  
IS COMING IN

- These fights account for 14% of overall fights in 2008-09.
- 80% of these fights have off-setting majors called.
- The action of the “aggressor” results in an extra minor penalty in 14.3% of these fights (i.e. 85% of the time it is a good hit that leads to the fight).
- The Top 30 fighters are rarely involved in these fights (15%) -  
- majority involve players who fight three or fewer times in a season.



# Length of Fights

	<u>2000-01</u>	<u>2008-09</u>
<b>Average (sec.)</b>	20.0	28.08
<b>Longest (sec.)</b>	105	111
<b>60 sec. or more</b>	1%	6%
<b>30 sec. or more</b>	30.9%	39.6%
<b>10 sec. or less</b>	23.1%	15.4%

- Fights last 40.4% longer in 2008-09 than in 2000-01.
- Fights after a faceoff have the longest average length of 30.8 seconds. SIZE OF THESE FIGHTERS



# Helmets and Visors

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## Helmets:

- In 59.2% of fights (296 of 500), one or both players' helmets have come off before or during the fight -- 40.8% both stay on.
- In 5.4% of fights (27 of 500), both players remove their helmets prior to fighting. In almost 80% of these instances, both players have visors.
- In 1% of fights (5 of 500), one player removes his helmet before a fight. In three of these five instances, the player had a visor.





# Helmets and Visors

## Top 30 Fighters (9 or more fights as of Feb. 11)

Helmets stay on for the duration of fight 64.3% (231)

Helmets come off during the fight 34.3% (123)

Take helmet off before the fight 1.4% (5)\*

\*The opposition had a visor every time

- 64.3% of Top 30 fighters maintain helmets for duration of fight (compared to overall percentage of 40.8%).

## Visors:

- In 6.6% of fights (33 of 500), one player has a visor.
- In 2.6% of fights (13 of 500), both players have a visor.



100 one has visor  
32 both have visor

ABOUT  
25%  
OF FIGHTS

# Player Goes Down to End Fight

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<b>"Down goes player"</b>	<b><u>2008-09</u></b>
<b>Fights ending with one or both on ice</b>	<b>66% (330)</b>
• <b>Fights ending with two players down</b>	<b>46% (230)</b>
• <b>Fights ending with one player down</b>	<b>20% (100)</b>
• <b>Head Hitting the Ice:</b>	<b>13 (2.6%)</b>
<b>Fights ending with both players standing</b>	<b>34% (170)</b>

DON'T HAVE 2000-01 DATA



# Injuries

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- In 500 fights in 2008-09 (through Feb. 7), 19 players had been injured and missed a total of 230 games.

*NOT PRECISE - PROBABLY HIGHER*

- In 792 fights in 2000-01, 20 players were injured and missed a total of 148 games.



# Injuries

(2008-09 through Feb. 22)

<u>Player</u>	<u>Games Missed</u>	<u>Injury</u>
Derek Brassard	28+	Shoulder
Steve MacIntyre	26	Fractured orbital
Cody Bass	25+	Shoulder
Landon Wilson	21+	Ribs
David Koci	19	Broken hand
Mike Komisarek	16	Shoulder/hand
Ole Tollefson	16	Head
Ruslan Fedotenko	15	Broken hand
Craig Weller	13	Head
Steve Ott	11	Broken hand
Derek Dorsett	9	Broken finger
Luc Leblond	9	Nasal fracture
Jordin Tootoo	7	Hand
Zack Stortini	6	Sprained knee
Jason Strudwick	3	Wrist
Joel Ward	2	Head
Nick Boynton	2	Head
Andre Roy	1	Elbow
Josh Gratton	1	Hand



# Injuries

2000-01

<u>Player</u>	<u>Games Missed</u>	<u>Injury</u>
Todd Simpson	40 games	Concussion
Ricard Persson	22 games	Broken ankle
Denis Pederson	18 games	Broken hand
Adam Deadmarsh	14 games	Concussion
Francis Bouillon	13 games	Broken hand
Lance Pitlick	8 games	Broken hand
Rhett Warrener	5 games	Concussion
Krzysztof Oliwa	5 games	Back
Wade Belak	4 games	Shoulder
Todd Harvey	3 games	Facial laceration
Rene Corbet	3 games	Concussion
Pierre Turgeon	3 games	Concussion
Jarome Iginla	2 games*	Broken hand
Wayne Primeau	2 games	Concussion
Dave Scatchard	1 game	Neck
Todd Fedoruk	1 game	Facial laceration
Darren Van Impe	1 game	Shoulder
Andy Sutton	1 game*	Dislocated shoulder
Jiri Fischer	1 game	Facial
Peter Worrell	1 game	Back



# In-Arena

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- There is apparent marketing and or additional multimedia in more than 5% of the fights in our game.

## Examples In-Arena

- Boxing bells are rung before the first punch is thrown
  - Drum/symbol sounds every time the home player lands a punch
  - Typical songs -- Bloody Sunday (U2), We Salute You (ACDC), Raise A Little Hell (Trooper), Eye of the Tiger (Survivor), Fight For Your Right (Beastie Boys)
- 
- Fights generate crowd noise and enthusiasm – additional multimedia in arena including replay prolongs that spike



# TV/Marketing

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## Examples TV/Marketing:

- 'Tale of the Tape' -- highlights the two fighters
- The "Cam Cam" -- camera following Janssen around in his quest for a fight
- Sponsored replays
  - Fox Sports' slow motion replay camera
  - 'Bringing the Heat' sponsored by Texas Pete
  - 'Ford Tough' moment of the game
- Broadcasters commentary
  - Knowing the history or background to the fight (ie. Rivalry, retribution for previous acts, previous matchup)



# The Role of a Fighter – In Players' Words

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**Shawn Thornton (on a fight early in the season with Steve Begin as retaliation for a Begin hit on Savard last March):** “I had to get it out of the way. I would have been thinking about it all night if I didn't get it out of the way on the first shift. That's why I skated over toward where he was standing. He was more than willing to oblige. He did his job, I did mine, and we just played after that.”

**Rick Nash (on today's fighter):** “Boll is part of a new generation of fighter because he can play a good amount of minutes and fight, too. He's a good player.”





# The Role of a Fighter – In Players' Words

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**David Steckel (on the respect that players have for a teammate who fights):** "He (Matt Bradley) put his butt on the line. He plays with a lot of heart, and he doesn't care who he fights. We know what it takes to go out there and do that. From a teammate standpoint, you can't ask anything more. He's what the definition of a teammate is."

**Darcy Hordicuk (on his role):** "If it was just up to me, I'd do it - I can't back down from a fight, but you have to listen to what the team wants and what the coaching staff wants. I kind of looked at the bench to see if they wanted me to go and if I get the nod, I'm going to do it. But at that point it's not about me, it's about the team and not changing the momentum. . . It's 3-0, there's really no point."



# The Role of a Fighter – In Players' Words

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**Derek Dorsett (on where he learned his craft):** "My mom and my grandma, they don't close their eyes or anything when I'm fighting, no. Nobody believes it, but they bob and weave and they're going through the fight with me."

